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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - KING FAHD'S DEATH

PARIS - PARIS - AUGUST 2, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

1. KING FAHD'S DEATH

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

INTERNATIONAL NEWS IS DOMINATED BY THE DEATHS OF KING FAHD AND OF SUDAN'S VICE PRESIDENT, IN ADDITION TO IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. JOHN BOLTON'S RECESS APPOINTMENT TO THE UN TOPS US-RELATED NEWS, FOLLOWED BY NASA'S PLANS TO REPAIR THE DISCOVERY SHUTTLE UP IN SPACE.

ALL NEWSPAPERS EXTENSIVELY REPORT ON KING FAHD'S DEATH AND ALL EDITORIALS ARE ALSO DEDICATED TO THAT SUBJECT. HERE ARE A FEW HEADLINES: "FAHD, DEATH OF A UNITED STATES ALLY" FOR CENTRIST FRANCE-SOIR, "SAUDI ARABIA: THE NEW KING OF OIL" FOR LEFT-OF-CENTER LIB ATION, "ARABIA, THE SUCCESSION'S CHALLENGE" FOR RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO, "SAUDI ARABIA FACES THE REFORMS' CHALLENGE" FOR ECONOMIC LA TRIBUNE AND "SAUDI ARABIA: THE DEATH OF KING FAHD OPENS A NEW ERA." (SEE PART C)

SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS DEVOTE ARTICLES ON SUDANESE VICE PRESIDENT GARANG'S DEATH. RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO HEADLINES "GARANG'S DEATH SIGNS PEACE AWAY" AND SAYS: "GARANG HAD MANAGED TO IMPOSE HIMSELF AS THE UNIQUE REPRESENTATIVE OF A PEACE HIGHLY SUPPORTED BY THE UNITED STATES. WITH HIS DEATH, SUDAN IS FRIGHTENED OF FALLING INTO THE UNKNOWN."

BOLTON'S NOMINATION AS US AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS IS REPORTED AMONG THE PRESS. CENTRIST LE PARISIEN HEADLINES "BUSH IS IMPOSING HIS AMBASSADOR". RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO "THE HAWK BOLTON AT THE UN DESPITE CONGRESS" AND NOTES "NO US AMBASSADOR TO THE UN HAD REACHED THAT POST THROUGH THIS MEANS." SEVERAL PAPERS POINT OUT THAT THE NOMINATION IS VALID ONLY FOR THE DURATION OF THE CURRENT CONGRESS, THAT IS TO SAY JANUARY 2007.

FOLLOWING THE POLEMICS SURROUNDING OSMAN HUSSAIN - ONE OF THE LONDON TERRORISTS - WHO MANAGED TO TRAVEL FROM LONDON TO ROME THROUGH PARIS WITHOUT BEING ARRESTED, CENTRIST FRANCE-SOIR POINTS OUT THAT ACCORDING TO THE INTERIOR MINISTER, BIOMETRIC PASSPORTS 'MIGHT' HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO HIS ARREST.

THIS MORNING, DURING AN INTERVIEW ON PRIVATE RADIO EUROPE 1 PRIME MINISTER DE VILLEPIN DECLARED THAT IT WAS 'NOT CONCEIVABLE' THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION ENGAGES ITSELF IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH TURKEY AS LONG AS THE LATTER HAS NOT RECOGNIZED CYPRUS.

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

SAUDI ARABIA

"AFTER FAHD" PIERRE ROUSSELIN IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/02) "THE DEMOCRATIZATION WANTED BY THE UNITED STATES HAS STARTED WITH GREAT CAREFULNESS, WITH THE FIRST BALLOT IN THE COUNTRY THIS YEAR: THE ELECTION OF HALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS. KING FAHD HAD REINFORCED THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH AMERICA, WHICH WAS TO REACH ITS PEAK IN 1991 DURING THE WAR TO LIBERATE KUWAIT. SINCE THEN, THERE HAVE BEEN THE ATTACKS AGAINST THE TWIN TOWERS IN NEW YORK ON THE 11TH OF SEPTEMBER 2001 AND THE SHOCK DUE TO THE FACT THAT FIFTEEN OUT OF NINETEEN TERRORISTS WERE SAUDIS. ARABIA MANAGED TO RECOVER. WITH KING ABDULLAH, IT NOW NEEDS TO REFORM."

"A NARROW WAY"

PASCAL AUBERT IN ECONOMIC LA TRIBUNE (08/02) "DESPITE HIS EIGHTY-TWO YEARS, KING ABDULLAH IS NOT REGARDED AS HOSTILE TO CHANGES. HE IS WATCHING TO ENSURE ANY EVOLUTION OF THE KINGDOM GOES THROUGH A MEASURED AND CONTROLLED PROCESS. AND NEVER MIND THOSE WHO ARE DREAMING OF IMMEDIATE DEMOCRATIZATION OR THOSE IN FAVOR OF THE STATUS QUO. SOCIAL PROGRESS AND POLITICAL OPENNESS WILL HAPPEN WITH MEASURED STEPS UNLESS SOCIAL TENSIONS WERE CREATED THAT COULD LEAD TO DEGENERATION."

"SAUDI AMBIGUITIES"

FRANOIS ERNENWEIN IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (08/02) "AT THE ARABIC COURT, THE IDEA OF A CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY ALWAYS MADE PEOPLE SHUDDER. DIPLOMATIC AMBIGUITIES, WHEN THE RAPPROCHMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST DURING THE FIRST GULF WAR DID NOT PREVENT THE RECOGNITION OF THE AFGHANISTAN TALIBAN REGIME. IN FACE OF THE TERRORIST THREAT OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS, AMONG WHICH MANY ARE FROM SAUDI ARABIA, SUCH AS OSAMA BIN LADEN, RIYADH HAS CHOSEN TO PLAY IT BY EAR. SOMETIMES CLOSE, SOMETIMES AWAY FROM THE WESTERN PREOCCUPATIONS."

"MAGIC AND SAUDI MIRAGES"

FRANOISE CROUIGNEAU IN ECONOMIC LES ECHOS (08/02) "SAUDI ARABIA WHICH HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MAIN BUYERS OF WEAPONS IN THE WORLD IN THE LAST THIRTY YEARS WILL REMAIN WOOED. AND EVEN IF THEY WERE TO DIVERSIFY THEIR SOURCES OF SUPPLY, THE UNITED STATES KNOWS IT WILL STILL DEPEND FOR A LONG TIME ON A COUNTRY THAT HAS A QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S OIL RESERVES AND EVEN MORE OF AN UNEQUALLED PRODUCTION POSSIBILITY TO ABSORB POSSIBLE CRISIS. NOT TO FORGET A ROLE TO LIMIT THE RISKS OF IMPLOSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

"GUN"

PATRICK SABATIER IN LEFT-OFF-CENTER LIB ATION (08/02) "THE LANDSCAPE OF THE SAUDI DESERT IS ALMOST IMMUTABLE, NEW MONARCH OR NOT. BUT ITS FABULOUS UNDERGROUND DOES NOT CONTAIN ONLY OIL: THE GAME OF TECTONICS ACCUMULATES TREMENDOUS ENERGIES THAT ARE CALLING FOR BREAKING OUT, INTO UPHEAVAL. IT'S NOT FOR NOTHING THAT THE ONE FAMOUS SAUDI OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY'S BORDERS IS BIN LADEN. NOTHING IS PREDICTING THAT THE SAUDI REFORMERS WILL BE CONDEMNED TO FAILURE. BUT THE GUN IS ON THEIR TEMPLE."

STAPLETON